that is growing in the mother.[1] Though this notion is not fully thought out, this much is clear: the *rayi* is a quantity, which increases with growth and diminishes with old age and in all forms of illness; it is impersonal, without sex or individual features; it is common to and infinitely divisible among all animate beings. It is a life principle or life soul, the Latin *anima*, and nothing more specific or personal. All that is peculiar to the individual human being, his appearance, his character, his particular spirit and intellect, comes from the two other entities, *fifingi* and, especially, *kuci*.

As death represents the complete severance of body and *anima*, so disease weakens the link and attacks the life principle. In sleep, body and life soul are separated temporarily and more lightly; normally, the *rayi* will return to the body; but one cannot predict that this will always happen, so that a person may die in his sleep. It is then, incidentally, when the life soul is loosened from the body, that it can be harmed by witches, who, as we shall hear, 'feed' on the *rayi*. When I dream, my *rayi* wanders about and sees all the things that come to me in the dream. But the *rayi* does not wander alone; it takes something with it that is, though not of the body, yet of bodily shape; for I may appear to others in their dreams, as in turn I dream of other persons. It is not, of course, the real, full person that is met with in dreams (for the real person may be away in other parts, or asleep at home), but only his or her image or shadow—the *fifingi*.

Fifingi means 'shadow' much as we understand the word, that is, the shadow thrown by men and animals, not the shade caused by inanimate things. But the word has a second, mystic, meaning, best translated as 'shadow soul'; for when a person dies and his body decomposes the *fifingi* continues to exist and will still be visible (as in our dreams of dead people). Normally, nothing further can be said about the *fifingi*; beyond appearing in dreams it has no effectiveness. It is not identical with the dead whose disembodied souls may act as the guardians of the living or be invoked in sacrifices: these souls or spirits represent that other entity, the *kuci*, to which we shall presently return. But in certain cases the *fifingi*, too, are active after death; they are said to find no rest, to haunt houses or localities, scare travellers, and to cause nightmares when they visit people in their dreams. This happens when a person, having died an unnatural death or in a strange place, was buried without the proper rites; in which case a symbolic burial *in absentia* will lay the ghost. More vaguely one also believes that evil persons are similarly condemned to wander about restlessly after death. In either case, however, it is not really

[1] This rule refers specifically to conception, not to sexual intercourse; for the parents may practise *coitus interruptus*.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

insect heralds the season, it must surely be sent by God.' We may mention finally that the decorations of houses and the ornaments on leather or carved wood frequently display the outline figures of the 'mythical' animals leopard, tortoise, or crocodile; again, no deeper significance attaches to them; also, today at least, the figures of 'ordinary' animals as well as other designs are as often employed, being all meant 'for amusement only'.

The most interesting variety of spirits is also the one least clearly conceived. This is the personal spirit or spirit double, which belongs to every person from birth until death and cannot be shed or changed. Men have male, women female, spirit doubles, and both can be either good or evil; there is no accounting for the latter fact, which rests entirely 'with God'. The spirits are also of unequal strength and often jealous of one another, forcing their own feelings of hostility upon their human counterparts. The success of a marriage, for example, will be determined by the manner in which the spirit doubles happen to agree. But the spirits are responsible only for the luck and fate of their human twins, not for their character or morals. A friendly spirit will protect its human twin; it will, for example, betray to him in sleep or dream the name of witches who try to harm him. More generally, the 'good' spirit can give wealth, prosperity, and success in everything, at least as much as its strength permits; a weak spirit might well fail in all these attempts; while 'bad' spirits would intentionally make their twins suffer nightmares, illness, and misfortune of all kinds.

Not every illness is of spirit origin; the illness which readily responds to treatment or has a well-understood physical origin (breaking one's leg, food poisoning, and the like), has nothing to do with spirits. Only stubborn or frequent ailments of obscure origin, and especially mental diseases, are ascribed to the spirit doubles. But again, this does not apply to every form of mental disorder. Thus the Nupe define idiocy in what are to them rational terms, as a mere 'deficiency' (*eti a gbà o*—'the head is insufficient'), and point out that it often goes together with bodily deformities. Like the latter, mental deficiency 'simply happens', for example, owing to some carelessness of the expectant mother. 'Raving lunacy', however, is invariably caused by spirits; and, let us note this, since the spirit doubles are part of divine creation, lunacy, being their gift, is ultimately a gift of God. Yet madmen are in no way vessels of divinity; rather are they instances of the misfortunes and evils which God inscrutably dispenses.

The belief in spirit doubles leads to curious consequences. If the power and morals of the spirit determine the success in life of its human double without determining also the character or morals of

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

falls lamentably short of the absolute assurance the Nupe place in these *cigbe*.

The answer to our question can only lie in the rigid secrecy which surrounds these magic medicines. No one using them will talk about it; indeed if he did, the efficacy of the magic would be gone. Thus, though I might use the wonderful farming *cigbe*, my neighbours may, for all I know, also use it, or even a stronger version; and though I could make myself invulnerable, my enemies might have *cigbe* to make their guns infallible. If in these instances the belief in *cigbe* is such that it protects itself from being disproved, this is even more so in the case of the *cigbe* protecting you from witchcraft. For this is clearly itself an imaginary threat whose defeat by an imaginary weapon is altogether outside empirical considerations. To some extent the efficacy of the medicines said to procure invisibility equally belongs to the realm of imaginary happenings. Two of the many informants with whom I discussed this point supplied the clue. The first, who himself owned this medicine and maintained that I too could use it with the desired effect, added this odd instruction: the medicine must be taken at night, before going to sleep. He meant by this that the medicine affected, not the physical body of a person awake, but the *fifingi*, the disembodied shadow soul, of persons asleep. The second informant was even more explicit. He explained that the person drinking the medicine was able, in *fifingi* shape, to wander about at night when all were asleep, to enter their houses unseen, to touch the bodies of the other sleepers, give them nightmares, and even to kill them if they struggled or hit out: to which extreme, however, no 'good' man would resort, save perhaps against enemies.

If we should consider invisibility achieved under such conditions to be hardly worth the trouble, let alone to prove the wonderful powers of the medicine, this is not so for the Nupe. For them, the medicine does two things one cannot 'normally' do; it enables you to control the movements of your *fifingi*, which otherwise wanders about at will, in the random fashion exemplified by dreams; and it causes the *fifingi* to be hidden from the people it visits, while ordinarily it would appear to them in their dreams. Furthermore, precisely such willed and hidden nightly visits are thought to be peculiar to witches, so that the *cigbe* makes you their equal. I must add, however, that the rest of my informants did not describe the efficacy of the invisibility *cigbe* in such mystic terms. They spoke of it as being concretely effective and hiding your body from the eyes of others when you meet them, say, in the street. But they would emphasize, as in the case of the other miraculous *cigbe* mentioned before, that this medicine must be used in utter secrecy

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

755 lest it lose its power. And here, it seems to me, we have the re-
• 828 quired loophole; for 'utter secrecy' I take to mean that the medi-
cine may only be used at night, when you cannot be seen, or among strangers, when at least you cannot be recognized, that is, in situations when no one can prove anything. My informants refused to commit themselves on this point. But exactly this kind of argument was brought up in connection with another, similar, medicine not previously mentioned, namely, a *cigbe* said to enable a man to feign death and to arise from the grave unharmed and invisible; thus magically equipped he can disappear from his village unbeknown to all, to reappear, now in visible shape, in foreign parts. This seems to be the only advantage offered by this *cigbe*. Now this advantage, my informants assured me, was past, thanks to railways and motor-cars of all things; for nowadays the person using the *cigbe* could reach the strange place no more quickly than would others, using the modern means of transport. But it is not merely the utility of the *cigbe* which has disappeared, but its virtue. Since other people, travelling non-magically, might well arrive together with and run into the person who did so magically, the secrecy of the proceedings has been lost, and with it the efficacy of a *cigbe*. If this argument seems less compelling to us than to the Nupe, it yet confirms the point made before, that this notion of miraculous medicines protects itself from proof or disproof.

755 Let us return to the *emisa* which accompany various *cigbe* pro-
789 cedures. Clearly, they must have some share in fostering or confirming the faith which the people put in their mystical medicines. I have so far treated these formulæ mainly as evidence for 'mystical intent'; but they would seem to define a particular species of this intent and one particularly reassuring. For the *emisa* comes closest to a magic spell, having the same rigidity and being similarly indispensable for the desired effects; if so, it would turn the whole *cigbe* practice into a strictly magical procedure, that is, a procedure resting on the mechanical manipulation of substances and words rather than on appeals to some transcendental intelligence.

Neither conclusion, however, is quite correct. The names and addresses of *cigbe*, the Nupe insist, carry no power in themselves; this lies in the 'ingredients' alone. If the *emisa* is indispensable it is so only in the sense in which the titles and formal greetings of men of rank are indispensable, being meant to acknowledge or indicate the power that lies in the rank but adding nothing to it. Furthermore, the *emisa* of medicines is meant to acknowledge also the ultimate source of their power, that is, the presence and will of God. If the wording of the *cigbe* greetings hardly reveals that